

REMARKS

Claim Amendments:

Applicants proposed amending independent claim 21 to include elements of allowed independent claim 13. Upon entry of this Amendment after Final, claims 13, 14, and 16-26 will remain pending and under current examination.

Regarding the Final Office Action:

For the reasons presented herein, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections set forth in the Final Office Action, wherein the Examiner:

(a) rejected claims 21, 22, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 00/00868 ("Chou") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,120,995 ("Phipps");

(b) rejected claims 23, 24, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou in view of Phipps, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,380,101 ("Breen"); and

(c) allowed claims 13-20.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 21-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chou in view of one or more of Phipps and Breen. These rejections have been overcome by the incorporation of features from allowed independent claim 13 into independent claim 21. Independent claim 21 is therefore allowable, and dependent claims 22-26 are also allowable at least by virtue of their respective dependence from allowable independent claim 21, as well as because they recite additional features not taught or suggested by the cited references. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections.

Allowed Claims 13, 14, and 16-20:

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 13, 14, and 16-20 are allowed.

Conclusion:

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment after Final under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing all of pending claims 13, 14, and 16-26 in condition for allowance. The proposed amendments place the claims in condition for allowance based on the incorporation of elements from allowed independent claim 13 into independent claim 21. Therefore, this Amendment after Final should allow for immediate and favorable action.

The Final Office Action contains statements characterizing the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statements are specifically identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statements in the Final Office Action.

If there are any remaining issues or misunderstandings, Applicants request the Examiner telephone the undersigned representative to discuss them.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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